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Leadership

Skills You Never Outgrow

Helper's Guide

Welcome to helpership in the 4-H leadership project! You are a very special person. Your assistance was requested as a helper by a 4-H member enrolled in *Leadership: Skills You Never Outgrow*. By working with the 4-H'er in this project, you will begin to form a relationship that can help each of you grow and develop.

Each young person who enrolls in the first level of the leadership project is expected to secure someone with more experience to be a personal helper in doing the project. Members in more advanced levels are involved with groups for some of their leadership learning activities, but they are encouraged to do some with a helper too.

This guide is designed to help you as you accept this new responsibility. You will be assisting one or more members individually as they grow in understanding themselves, other individuals, and groups.

How the Project Works

Leadership: Skills You Never Outgrow is like many other 4-H projects in that it helps 4-H'ers learn things they can use the rest of their lives. Leadership skills help people help themselves and others achieve their goals. The project is designed to help the member get experience with the skills he or she needs to lead. Ask the member to share the project book with you and read the introduction section. It will help you gain an understanding of the project.

Members select which learning activities they wish to do to help them learn. Project guidelines suggest they choose at least one activity from each of the leadership skill areas in the book. There are numerous activities to choose from.

Once activities are selected, the member will work through the activities one at a time with your help. He or she will be involved in doing, thinking or talking about things leaders need to be able to do. After doing the actual activity the members are urged to think about what they have been doing and how it might relate to other situations.

What You Will Do

As a helper you will help the member decide what to do in the project. Encourage him or her to choose activities that will be challenging and give experience with new skills.

You will also help him or her understand and work through the activities. At the end your task is to ask questions and be a good listener. Help the member think beyond the activity just completed. Try to identify what can be learned from it.

You shouldn't try to give advice except to share your own experiences. If something comes up in your discussions that makes you think the member may need help, ask an adult you respect to suggest someone who can give the help needed.

Be available, willing to participate and enthusiastic about helping when you meet with the member. You have an important assignment. It is an honor to be respected enough by another person to be asked for help. Take pride in your work and both of you will enjoy the new challenges in the project.

Being a helper for a friend is a position of trust. Your 4-H member will trust you with some of his or her personal thoughts and feelings. It is very important to return this trust by keeping this information between you unless the 4-H'er says it's o. k. to share it with others. You can also share some of your personal thoughts too. This will reinforce the trust between you.



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Understanding the Young Member

Young people vary greatly in age, character, maturity and experience. Some are very quiet and shy while others are active and outgoing. You may be working with a member who is beginning in the leadership project or one with several years experience. Members can start the project at any age, but the majority are ages 9-11 when they begin the leadership project.

Members this age have lots of enthusiasm and enjoy doing new things. They like activities, but many don't enjoy doing the same thing for a long time.

You will enjoy helping the younger member develop a sense of responsibility and learn to cooperate with others. Always set a good example yourself, since boys and girls of this age tend to idolize older youth and adults.

Young members need guidance and encouragement, especially during their first years in a project. The first skill level, covered by Books I and II, involves "looking in". This level is designed to help members learn more about themselves and to learn personal leadership skills. Some of the learning activities will involve them in thinking of things they have never thought about before, and they will think it's hard. Encourage them to try because that's how to grow.



Activities of the Helper

Here are some of the things you can do to be a good helper:

- * Assist your member during his or her entire year in the leadership project. It is the member's responsibility to schedule times to get together.

- * Encourage and praise your member.
- * Start the project by helping your member plan which activities to do in the leadership project. The project book gives help with project planning. Write the plans on paper, so each of you can have a copy. Members should record their plans on their planning sheets.
- * Help the member complete the activities chosen. Remember the 4-H motto: "Learn By Doing." Encourage your member and help find other help and resources, if needed, but don't do the work for him or her. You may be able to do a couple of activities together when you meet, but don't rush through.
- * At the end of each activity, take plenty of time to do the "Looking back" or "Interpreting" questions to help the member think about what he or she has done. This is a good time to help apply these ideas to other situations that are similar. Be creative, talk about anything that you think will help the member learn and think about new ideas.
- * If the member decides to try more activities in addition to those in his or her plan during the year, that's o.k. Changes should be recorded on the planning sheet anytime.
- * Work with the leadership 4-H project leader in assisting your member and others with group activities.
- * Send your member a card for his or her birthday, at Christmas or Valentine's Day. Do other things to show your special interest.
- * Be a friend to your member in and out of 4-H activities. Be available to talk and say "Hi" wherever you see him or her.
- * At the end of the year meet with the member and discuss what he or she liked most about the project. What would he or she do differently next time? Help the member complete his or her record for the leadership project. Encourage your member to re-enroll in a leadership 4-H project for another year.

Thanks. You have helped someone who looks up to you learn and grow. This is one of the most important roles a person can have in a lifetime. If you put yourself fully into the helper role, no doubt you gained personally too.

This Helper's Guide was prepared by Barbara Geiger, Eric Fugate, 4-H'er's; and Mary K. Munson, Fred Haegele, Extension Specialists, 4-H/Youth, with counsel and assistance from other members of the Illinois State 4-H Leadership Development Committee.